National Child Welfare Workforce Institute
LEARNING, LEADING, CHANGING

WORKFORCE RESOURCE:
One-Page Summary

Promoting Antiracist Child Welfare Practice

Collins-Camargo, C., & Winters, A. (2022). Promoting racial equity and antiracist practice in child welfare: Perceptions of public child welfare administrators. *Journal of Public Child Welfare.* https://doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2022.2116142

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

Study authors interviewed 16 regional- and state-level public child welfare agency administrators representing 13 states on the inequities they see in the child welfare system, the major challenges they've experienced advancing antiracist practice, and strategies they believe will be successful in moving practice forward.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

The child welfare administrators interviewed observed inequities at every key decision point along the service and delivery continuum. Two major themes emerged:

Challenges to engaging in antiracist child welfare practice

which includes staff perceptions and biases and lack of recognition of racism; agency data that demonstrated inequities but no sustained efforts to address the contributing factors; staff recruitment, retention, and supervision issues; and the need to study and revise agency policies and procedures to promote equitable practice

The need for a strategic, multipronged antiracist approach to reducing inequities in child welfare policies and practices

which includes shifting the focus and funding to family support and preventive services, elevating family and community voices, engaging courts and community partners in change, using technology and data to promote accountability, and establishing a collective commitment to equitable practices

> **We gotta do the investment in our people thinking about race... people have to feel like they're working for an agency that respects them as people.**

> **It is not appropriate or reasonable to expect that [the agency] will be the end all be all of caring for children and families … The better we are at communicating and working together, the more likely we can have impact on issues like racial inequity.**

Strategies identified for the workforce to advance equitable, antiracist practice included:

- Elevate parents and community partners, shifting power so agencies lead from behind
- Encourage university partners to incorporate antiracist practice into their curricula
- Have courageous conversations with staff
- Train staff and partners to implement self-reflective, antiracist practice
- Diversify staff and promote people of color in leadership

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Administrators acknowledged inequities exist in their agencies and emphasized the need for a system-wide antiracist approach that addresses the child welfare policies and practices contributing to racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes. The challenges identified and promising strategies shared can inform the broader discussion and planning on how to best support children and families in an equitable way.